

Pairs Squared

Pairs Squared is a strategy that allows a teacher to quickly group pairs of students into squares (groups of four) in order to give them the opportunity to share their thoughts and work with peers. It may be used effectively as a follow up to *Think-Ink-Pair-Share* (TIPS) to allow students to actively engage in productive dialogue with each other. A detailed description of TIPS and variations may be found at this link:

http://www.s2temsc.org/uploads/1/8/8/7/18873120/think_pair_share_strategy_and_variation_s.pdf

Pairs Squared may be used at various points in the study of a concept or topic. Some possible examples include:

- At the beginning of a unit of study to help students access prior knowledge;
- At different points during a unit of study to help students organize and integrate information as they work through the unit;
- At or near the end of a unit of study to help students summarize and reflect on learning.

How to implement the strategy:

1. Students have already been working in pairs on some task.
2. Have pairs of students form squares (groups of four) so that they can share their work and thinking with each other.
3. Whole class debrief may follow.

Adapted from:

- Gunter, M.A., Estes, T.H., & Schwab, J.H. (1999). *Instructions: A models approach*, 3rd edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Lyman, F. (1981). "The responsive classroom discussion." In Anderson, A.S. (Ed.), *Mainstreaming Digest*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland College of Education.
- Millis, B.J., & Cottill, P.G., Jr. (1998). *Cooperative learning for higher education faculty*, American Council on Education, Series on Higher Education. The Oryx Press: Phoenix, AZ.